THE WONDERFUL LAMP.

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MANY years have passed since my uncle Benjamin invited me to his house, to spend my tenth birthday in the company of my cousins. As I was about to

return home in the evening, my uncle put in my hand a bright new sixpence. This was a large sum for me to possess; and it not a little puzzled me how I should spend it. At length, I resolved that the new sixpence should be exchanged for a book

My purpose once fixed, a few minutes found me in a shop, where being attracted by a colored picture in a book, I bought it. The title was, "The Wonderful Lamp;" all I now remember about it is, that it was a foolish story of a magician, who gave a young person a lamp, by which he was able to escape all dangers, overcome all his enemies, and attain to happiness at last.

This silly story filled my mind with foolish ideas of beings and things which never existed. But I have grown wiser since then, and have learned that such stories are false, absurd, and calculated to mislead the minds of youth.

Four years passed away; my school-

boy days were gone, and I was about to enter into the busy scenes of the world. My fourteenth birthday had arrived; and I again went to spend the day at my uncle Benjamin's. The hours passed pleasantly in the society of my cousins; but, at last, the moment arrived when we must part.

My uncle, as I stood on the threshold of the door, gave me another birthday present. "Take this, my boy," said he, "and this; and may the God of all grace bless you, and keep you in the way that you should go."

So saying, he placed in one hand a shining new half-crown, and in the other a well-bound Bible, with a leaf folded down on the text, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Psa. 119 : 105. And truly have I found it so in the way that I have travelled: it has kept me from many a danger into which I was nigh falling; and I resolve, in dependence on divine grace, to follow

its light, until it guides me safely to heaven.

I feel a concern that others may profit by what I have been taught. But O, how shall I begin to speak of the value of this truly "wonderful lamp;" and how shall I direct the young to use it aright?

What lamp can be compared to it? It is not the gift of man nor angels: it is the gift of God to a dark world; a light from heaven, casting its rays over all ages of time, and in part disclosing the heavenly world to our view. It clearly displays the path to joys above, with all the dangers and snares that beset the youthful traveller's feet.

I then went to live with a person who was an optician by trade, and a man of much wisdom and piety. As he loved the Bible himself, he was concerned that all in his house should love it too. In his shop were telescopes, eye-glasses, and lamps, of various sorts and sizes.

To interest me in my new employment, one of the men was directed to show me a curious lamp he was making. It had four glasses, and according to the way it was turned, it cast a light of a different color: the man held it one way, and the light that shone through the glass was a brilliant green; he turned it again, and the rays were a beautiful crimson; once more he changed its position, and all around was of a sky-blue color: but the last glass I thought the best; it was a golden yellow. I was not a little delighted with this lamp, and began to wish it were mine.

When the business of the day was closed, my employer began to converse with me respecting this lamp. "It has often reminded me of the Bible," said he. "That holy book may be said to have four glasses. The first I may call the glass of *history:* it casts its light over the past, from the first man who trod this earth, through the different

ages of the world, to the time of our Lord and his disciples; and, unlike much other history, it is a true and faithful record of events the most important to be known. The second is the glass of *precept*, by which we may clearly see the path of duty and holiness. The third glass is that of *prophecy*, shedding its light on that which is to come. And the last I may call the glass of *promise*, giving a cheerful light in the darkest season."

Shortly after this, my employer intended to try a new telescope he had made for an astronomer; and, as a privilege, I was allowed to sit up beyond my usual hour, to witness the beautiful scenery of heaven at night. Oh, never shall I forget the delight with which I gazed for the first time through so large a telescope. The moon appeared with its light and dark parts, which are supposed to be its mountains and valleys; a thousand stars glittered in the sky, many

of them of beautiful and vivid colors. But when I was told that there were thousands or millions more which the telescope could not reach, O how I longed for a glass that would show me them all, and discover whether or not holy and happy beings dwell in them, and what they do, and how they live, and whether they sin and die as we do in this lower world.

After I got to bed, I was kept awake for a long time, thinking of what I had been beholding. In the morning, as we sat at breakfast, my employer, who seemed to have a habit of comparing spiritual things with temporal, remarked, that the Bible might be likened to a telescope.

"It is true," said he, "it does not gratify our curiosity, by telling us of worlds and beings with which we have nothing to do; but it penetrates far beyond the stars in the highest sky, and sets before us worlds and beings which no mortal eye has ever reached: it looks into

heaven itself; and by faith beholds the holy angels before the throne of God. Also, the spirits of glorified saints, with their harps of gold, and white robes, and palms of victory, where they sin no more, neither die any more, but ever sing the praises of the Lord who loved them, and gave himself for them, and washed them from their sins in his own precious blood. It also pierces through the darkness that hides the world of misery from our view, and shows us the state of those who died in sin, without believing on the Saviour of the world."

One day I saw the foreman repairing a lamp, which appeared to me of a singular construction. I inquired what it was.

"A safety-lamp, master Henry," said he.

"Well, I never saw such a lamp before," said I: "but why is it called a safety-lamp; and how is it used?"

"Those that go down into mines,"

continued the foreman, "often meet with confined gases which explode when a light is brought near them; and many hundreds of poor miners have thus lost their lives. But a wise man, some years ago, invented this lamp, by which the miners can see their way along the dark passages of the mine with little danger. They are now commonly used in the coal mines of England, and are called 'Davys,' from the name of the inventor, Sir Humphry Davy."

"This lamp has indeed been a great blessing to the world," said my employer; "but how much richer a blessing has the Bible proved. Many are the enemies that beset us, and the wrong roads that invite us to enter; but let us trust to the Bible, which will still be found a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path."

Among the many curious things with which I soon became familiar, was an "inverting telescope;" it showed every

thing in a contrary position to what it was really in: it made the strangest appearances you can imagine.

"Ah," said my master, "this is *not* like the Bible; that shows every thing exactly as it is."

In looking back on my past life, I cannot be thankful enough for my uncle's gift—the Bible, and for a pious teacher, who, by his conversation and example, taught me its value.

But we may possess a useful lamp, and for want of knowing its right use, it may be cast aside, as of little worth, and covered with dust. I wish this had never been the case with the book of God. If you would learn its use,

Bring every thing to its light. You may safely trust to it, for it shows every thing in its true nature and proper colors. No wonder, then, that wicked men neglect the Bible: "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."

John 3 : 20. When I have been asked to go to the playhouse, or to the fair, I have thought, "Let me bring this to the light of my Bible;" and there I have found it written, "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men." Prov. 4 : 14. When invited to spend the day of the Lord in pleasure-taking, a light has shone from the sacred page: "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy." Exod. 20 : 8. When tempted to any sin, I have called to mind what is written: "The wages of sin is death." Rom. 6 : 23. So that, I hope, the holy beams of this light have shone around my path, and kept me from many evils into which others have fallen—some to rise no more.

Use it constantly. How often has my uncle's gift afforded me direction and comfort in my journey hitherto. It has proved a friend that has never failed me. In prosperity it has spoken to me, "If riches increase, set not your heart upon

them." Psalm 62 : 10. When adversity or sickness has darkened my mind, my way has been lit up with the words, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him." Heb. 12 : 5. When brought to a stand, and I have not known whether to turn to the right or to the left, I have rested on the promise, "I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go : I will guide thee with mine eye." Psalm 32 : 8. As I have stood by the grave of those I loved, a light has shone from the Bible into the grave itself : "I am the resurrection, and the life : he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." John 11 : 25. And above all, when darkness has filled my mind, from the conviction that I am a poor guilty sinner, O what joy has risen in my heart, as I have read the delightful words, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." 1 John, 1 : 7. It has been

all this to *me*. If you look up to God for his blessing, it will prove the same to *you*.

Use it prayerfully. We may misuse the Bible as well as neglect it. Many do not understand it, because they do not pray that the Holy Spirit would lead them into all truth. If you want a short prayer, the Bible itself will help you to one: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." Psalm 119 : 18.

"Divine Instructor, gracious Lord,
Be thou for ever near:
Teach me to love thy sacred word,
And view my Saviour there."

Follow its light. It will surely lead you to Jesus, the Saviour of sinners. "Search the Scriptures," for they testify of him. John 5 : 39. All the rays of this heavenly light centre in him. Hence we learn, that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," 1 Tim. 1 : 15, and that he is able, willing, and waiting

to save. From the cross of a crucified Redeemer it will lead you on to heaven, where there is perfect and perpetual day, and where even the light of the Bible will be no longer needed, but where you will bless the Lord for giving such a lamp to your feet as guided you through the darkness of earth to the everlasting light and glory of heaven.

"This lamp through all the weary night
Of life shall guide our way,
Till we behold the clearer light
Of an eternal day."

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